

February 26, 2020

“Our mission is to celebrate God’s transforming Love in Jesus, by following where Jesus’ Love is calling us to serve the community”



Ascension This Week

**More On Change
— from Fr Bill Baker**

On Sunday, March 1

- 8 am Said Eucharist
- 10 am Sung Eucharist
- 11:15 Coffee Hour
- 2:30 pm Service at Lakeside Manor

Inside this issue:

- “More on Change” an article from Fr Bill Baker
- Lenten Retreat Day with Fr Mark Brown
- Lenten Series and Soup Suppers beginning March 5th in the rectory.
- Save the Date events and meetings.

I mentioned on Sunday that change is constant. However, it does not mean that when we attempt to make a change, that it will be easy. Creating a new habit, or making a change, takes a minimum of 21 days and real lasting change often takes longer. I want to use this newsletter article to make a few really concrete suggestions if we decided to make a substantial change this Lent.

Start with a plan. Say you want to add daily prayer to your life. Always pray first! Ask God to help guide your process. Then, do some research. Read about the different kinds of prayer online, pick up a book at the library or talk to a trusted religious leader.

There are many books on the different kinds of meditation that we might practice. In addition, the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) offers 4 offices to pray throughout the day. They are Morning Prayer, Noon Day Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline. You can also find apps online that can lead you in prayer or meditation or you can join an online community which prays together daily using Facebook or other online resources.

Once you have done some research and decided the type of prayer you want to add to your Spiritual discipline, write a plan. Think about how often you want to add the prayer you chose. Maybe you want to start meditating for 5 minutes every day. Decide when you want to pray and what works with your schedule. You might decide that early mornings are good or right before bed is best for you.

If you add an Office from the BCP, decide which ones you will do and how frequently you will pray them. I suggest starting with one office and do it the same time every day. However, some people might choose to do Morning Prayer on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and Compline on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Write your plan and try to stick to it.

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Finally, I want to suggest that since it takes a while to make a change, if you miss one day, do not get discouraged. Start over the next day. Part of the reason we fail at change is that we expect to do it perfectly and this is not realistic. If you choose Compline and you are tired one night, go to bed, but do it the next night. If you find yourself very tired at night, switch to Morning Prayer. If you decide to meditate and you find your mind wondering, do not judge yourself. Some days it is easier than others, but do not give up and do not give in.

Any change that is worth doing is going to take time and patience. We now have 40 days in Lent to make a change in our lives and improve our connection to God. As I said on Sunday, whatever we commit ourselves to this Lent, is bound to have a lasting impact that goes far beyond the next 40 days or even 40 years. It might just change the rest of our lives.

Blessings, Fr Bill+

St. Patrick's Day Parade

A little over a week ago, I accompanied the Pride Center of Staten Island, as well as a number my fellow clergy colleagues, as the Pride Center attempted to make an application to march in the Parade. Because the Pride Center serves the LBGTQI+ Community, that application was denied. I believe this action by the Parade Committee discriminated against the Pride Center and the LBGTQI+ Community.

I attempted to explain to the Parade Committee that the early Church disagreed about a number of issues like what they could eat, the day on which to have the Sabbath and what to wear. They disagreed, but in Paul's Letter to the Romans Chapter 14, our brother Paul, encourages his brothers and sisters to live at peace with one another, not to judge and not to put stumbling blocks in front of each other.

Last week, I met with community and religious leaders, and the Pride Center to discuss the decision of the Parade Committee and work towards a solution. You might have seen that footage from the meeting with Pride Center and Parade Committee on the CBS Evening News. I was in some of the photos that made the news and, tomorrow I will be quoted in the New York Times about the issue of inclusion in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Bishop Dietsche is aware of my participation and he supports both my decision to speak out about injustice and for the LBGTQI+ Community to march in the Parade on Sunday.

Let us remember, as Christians, we do not need to be in complete agreement with each other about any issue, but we need to refrain from judging and live at peace with one another. I pray that all faithful people will find ways to work together and seek justice for everyone.

On Saturday, March 28, Fr Mark Brown will hold a Lenten Retreat Day at Ascension from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. RSVP by Wednesday, March 25th by calling the parish office or leaving a message.

“Slow Down: Resurrection Ahead!”

You are invited to join Fr Mark Brown for a time of quiet reflection, guided meditation, and conversation. Fr Mark will share impressions of his many visits to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and how it has deepened his understanding of Resurrection not only as something that happened to Jesus or something that we ourselves look forward to, but also as something woven into the fabric of everyday life even now, in ways both great and small. As Jesus said, “I am the Resurrection” and “I am with you always.” We will conclude our time of retreat with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

Birthday Blessings for Robbie Swanson , age 4,
Deacon Geri’s grandson, on Sunday, February 23

During Lent, Morning Prayer will be offered on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 9:30 am in the church. Please consider adding this to your Lenten devotion.



Ash Wednesday

Our lives as Christians can be spent berating our hearts. But the Good News is about remembering who Jesus has made you to be and who he’s making you into. It’s not your work and it can never be your work. You can’t do it to yourself.





Beginning Thursday, March 5th at 7:00 pm Fr. Bill will host the first Lenten Series & Soup Suppers in the Rectory. This year the Lenten Series- "The Signs of Life", from the SSJE, explores the signs and symbols at the heart of Christian worship. This free 5-week offering encourages individuals and groups to explore the riches of our worship traditions, liturgy and sacraments, and the art and architecture of our worship spaces, revealing the full meaning of these signs, deepening our experience of Christian vocation and guiding us toward ongoing conversion.

Light: When we see by the light of Christ, everything that is close to us, things as simple and as vital as light and water and food and shelter and community – everything – is transformed into a vehicle of grace. ...

Water: ... Baptism is a sacrament of surrender, the sacramental act of letting go of fear and control, making friends with the unknown, and beginning to trust that God will sustain you, even in the midst of chaos and death.

Food: When we remember food is life, we gain a better understanding of what it means to ask God to give us our daily bread . . .

Shelter: The liturgy itself shelters us, the same patterns unfolding, again and again, day by day, week by week, year by year. ...

Community: Being in loving relationship means that the truth of our very selves will be revealed.

Save the Date: Upcoming Services, Meetings and Events:

Morning Prayer During Lent: During Lent, Morning Prayer will be offered on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 9:30 am in the church. Please consider adding this to your Lenten devotion.

Thursday, March 5: The first meeting of the Lenten Study Group at Ascension at 7:00 pm in the rectory. See the flyer in this newsletter for details.

Saturday, March 14: St Patrick's dinner with DJ and dancing, St John's Church on Bay Street.

The IPC Lenten Committee offers ***Evensong***, an Evening Prayer Service with hymns at **St. Alban's Church on Sunday, March 15th at 4:00 pm**. Guest Homilist: The Rev Jerry Keutcher. The theme of the service will follow the SSJE 2020 Lenten study "Signs of Life - Why Church Matters - Light / Water / Food / Shelter / Community." A light supper will be shared after the service. (76 St Albans Place, Staten Island, 10312. phone: 718-984-7756)

Sunday, March 15: The next monthly Friendship Dinner is Sunday, March 15, 5:30 to 7:30 at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island, 312 Fillmore St., SI 10301, next to Snug Harbor. This is a wonderful opportunity to socially meet those of other faiths bringing us together through the One common to us all: God. It is Pot Luck and you are asked to bring a vegetarian dish.

Please join us at **5:00 pm on Saturday, March 21**, and every third Saturday of the month for a **healing service at Ascension**. As many of you know, Arthur Ullstrom has a spiritual gift of healing prayer. On February 15 he will be joined by Dcn. Geri and Fr Bill for the laying on of hands and prayer for healing.

On Saturday, March 28, Fr Mark Brown will hold a Lenten Retreat Day at Ascension from 9 am to 2:30 pm. **"Slow Down: Resurrection Ahead"** RSVP by Wednesday, March 25th by calling the parish office or leaving a message. We will conclude our time of retreat with a celebration of the holy Eucharist. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.



Saturday, May 9: Save the Date for the Episcopal Church Women's Annual Meeting. More information will follow closer to the date.

